

I was stunned to learn of Sinclair Broadcast Group's decision to require all its stations to air a piece of political propaganda just days before the November 2nd election.

I think it's clear that what Sinclair is doing demonstrates the problems caused by the increasing consolidation of media. This is a large company controlling dozens of stations violating its public trust to broadcast in the public interest.

Instead, Sinclair is making a crass political calculation. The company is not doing well financially, and needs to have ownership rules loosened so that it can acquire more stations and control larger portions of television markets than currently allowed. Sinclair management assumes ownership restrictions are more likely to be loosened under another four years of Bush than they would be in a Kerry administration. They have therefore decided to attempt to swing the election to Bush by forcing their stations to show blatant anti-Kerry propaganda.

Sinclair is doing this under the false premise that the anti-Kerry film is "news." The program most certainly is NOT news. It contains false accusations, and no new information. Sinclair does this even as it has scaled back and outsourced its true news programming (with most cuts in local programming).

As a longtime broadcast professional, I am dismayed by the actions of Sinclair Broadcasting, and implore you to consider this company's actions as you decide whether allowing corporations to own larger and larger shares of the airwaves is actually beneficial to the public interest.